

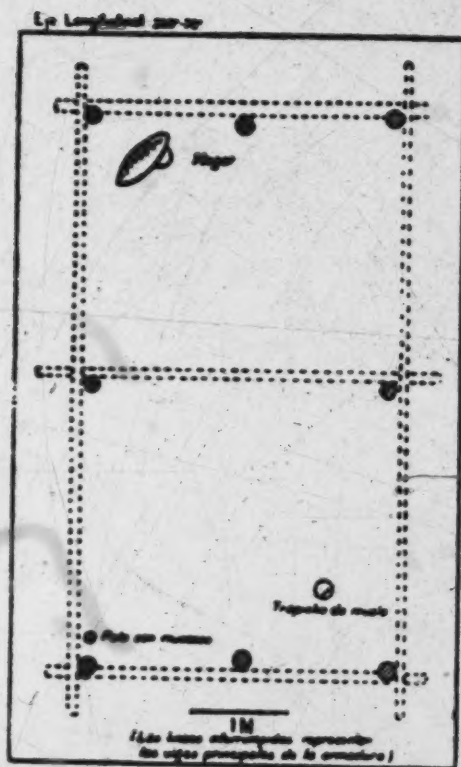


Fig. 2 — Kamarakoto Work Shelter.
Building G at Uruyén (see Map, Fig. 11), a
wata-imedapun. Ground plan, showing the
eight uprights and (in broken lines) the frame
beams. The fixtures include a fire hole, dug
in the ground, a cane press, and a forked up-
right for a casave press.

342 Both these types of structures serve the same purpose. They are the
homes, properly speaking, where the household goods are stored, where most
of the meals are prepared and eaten, and where the family sleeps.

343 Near the dwelling there is usually built a simple quadrangular structure
with open sides and a ridged roof. This serves as a sort of work room. It

342 longitudinal ridge-pole that runs between the upright posts and projects be-
 335 yond each to support also the roof-poles of the semicircular ends. The straight
 ridge is thus longer than (up to twice as long as) the straight part of the walls
 and the main uprights are only about two-thirds as high as would be necessary
 for a circular house of radius comparable to the ends of the elongate house.
 Uprights intermediate between the two central uprights and the wall are few in
 number (usually only four) and near the walls, keeping the center of the house
 relatively clear, and serve rather to support transverse rafters and storage racks
 than to reenforce the roof.

343 The basic plan of the wall-less shelter consists of six uprights, two sup-
 335 porting the ridge pole and two shorter ones on each side supporting an eave-
 pole. A transverse rafter is usually run across each end between the corner
 poles. In the larger and more typical open work-houses, the plan is compli-
 cated by adding an upright in the middle of each side, as an additional support
 for the eave-pole, and a central support is also provided for the ridge-pole.
 In order to keep the center of the shelter free, the latter support is usually not
 by a pole sunk in the ground but by one rising from a transverse rafter (see
 Fig. 4B).

342 An imperfect smoke-vent is sometimes left just under the end of the ridge
 335 pole in the elongate houses. Otherwise there is no provision for the exit of
 smoke and the inside of the roof of a house that has been occupied for any
 length of time is heavily coated with tar and soot. The floor is simply the
 natural earth of the locality. The first act in building a house is to clear the
 grass and other vegetation from the floor area and for a meter or so beyond
 [353] where the house wall is to be. There are no internal walls or subdivisions of
 any sort except that heavy equipment, such as the hollowed logs for casave and
 cachiri, is often piled between the two uprights of an elongated house, leaving
 a relatively free passage around this central barrier on both sides.

Windows are never provided. Doors, of less than normal adult height,
 always have a vertical wall-post on each side and usually a second post a few
 centimeters inside each of these, so that a very short passage is provided. At
 [285] night a palm leaf mat (or, rarely, hewn boards) is lashed to these inner posts
 to close the opening.

Uruyén.

621 It is misleading to speak of a Kamarakoto village, since the typical in-
 habited place has only one family-group, which may include one to three,
 rarely more, adult men with their families, and seldom has more than one or
 two occupied dwellings. Real village accumulations with several unrelated
 [101] family-groups do not occur. Uruyén, where most of my information was
 gathered, is here used as an example of a Kamarakoto inhabited place.

[text continues on p. 120]

252 fruit, which is a minor part of the diet. The only important raw food is ba-
 262 nanas, and these are frequently cooked or may be crushed into a paste which
 is eaten with casave.

372 Fire is made with flint and steel (Fig. 23). A few related tribes (notably
 171 the Makuchis) make fire, or did until recently, with a wooden drill whirled be-
 tween the palms of the hands. I did not meet any Kamarakoto who could do
 this, or who even knew that it was possible. Like machetes or steel arrow points,
 flint and steel are now so old in the tribe that they believe them to be entirely
 317 native. The "flint," kakon, is usually a piece of jasper (or jasperized sand-
 stone), which is abundant in this region, and the steel, kulū-kulū (literally
 "file"), is a small file. The tinder, wato-dapon, is a twist of cotton wrapped
 with string and carried in a piece of bamboo. Fire can be produced with this
 apparatus almost as quickly as with a phosphorus match. It is of use principal-
 ly when traveling, since the fire at a settlement seldom goes out altogether.
 Small sticks are used for fuel. The same word, apoi, is applied to fire and to
 firewood, while the more usual Carib word for "fire," wato, is applied only to
 the apparatus, flint, steel, and tinder, for making a fire.

252 Fires may simply be built on the ground without any hearth, especially
 354 for roasting. Fires for baking casave and similar purposes commonly are also
 on the surface of the ground surrounded by stones, usually three, of equal height
 to hold a pot or puitari. Fires for making stews are more often built in a simple
 but characteristic hearth, apoi piapo?. This is merely an excavation in the
 ground, the main fire-hole lenticular or canoe-shaped, with a recess on each
 side of the middle so that a round-bottomed pot sits here securely.

252 Cooking is usually done in the dwelling, where several fires may be kept
 going simultaneously, but in fair weather much of it is done in the work-shelter
 or outdoors near the dwelling and work-house.

262 Casave, the most important single food, is prepared in essentially the
 171 same way everywhere in South America so that the process need not be de-
 252 scribed in detail. The roots, kōst, are first scraped with a knife and then
 4/2 grated into a hollowed log, moru (Fig. 24). The grater, sama:ri, is not made
 429 by the Kamarakotos but traded from the pabanaton (Maquiritares and allied
 Indians). All the necessary materials are available to the Kamarakotos, but the
 manufacture is very tedious and they prefer not to bother with it. Koch-
 114 Grünberg has described and illustrated this manufacture among the Yekuanás,
 a Maquiritare tribe (1923, Vol. III, pp. 347-349 and Plate 61), and the com-
 plete agreement between the graters that he describes and illustrates and those
 used by the Kamarakotos confirms the statements as to their Maquiritare origin.
 In brief, the grater is a flat board on one side of which innumerable sharp stones
 or bits of steel (from knives, fish hooks, etc.) are set in holes and fixed with gum.

252 The grated mass is then placed in a press, called "sebucán" in Venezue-
 288 lan Spanish and tangōi in Kamarakoto (Fig. 25). This is a long cylindrical

[text continues on p. 138]